



## Washington State Legislature

August 18, 2021

Governor Jay Inslee  
Office of the Governor  
PO Box 40002  
Olympia, WA 98504-0002

Superintendent Chris Reykdal  
PO Box 47200  
Olympia, WA 98504

### **Electronic Delivery**

Dear Governor Inslee and Superintendent Reykdal;

#### **An open letter to Governor Inslee and state Superintendent Reykdal**

Our constituents are asking: "Does our Washington governor and state superintendent have the authority to impose the latest 'mandates' regarding forced vaccinations and wearing of masks by children?" As their elected representatives, we are writing this open letter with strong concerns.

We ask you both to show us and our constituents where those mandates are allowed under current law. Let's look at the language in the 500-plus days emergency order: is it legal to force employers to fire competent employees, and if they choose not to terminate good, hard-working employees, is a fine or threats of funding cuts enforceable? Can public schools lose state and federal funds due to decisions by local elected school boards that may be contrary to a "mandate?"

Mandating the wearing of masks in our schools is causing an uproar among our teachers, parents, and students. To threaten our education system and workers with termination because they refuse to wear masks is, in our opinion, wrong. This action will adversely impact our children's education, putting them even further behind.

Under the latest "mandates" all state workers and teachers are being forced to receive a Covid vaccine in order to keep their jobs. This requirement includes state highway workers, fish hatchery personnel and agency office clerks who rarely interact with the public. Health care workers, up until now, have been our heroes during this pandemic. Now, we are treating them with distrust and punishing them if they choose not to be vaccinated. Hospitals and clinics are already dealing with catastrophic shortages of nurses and other trained healthcare workers. Many people are moving to other states to find work in their professions which further exacerbates the trained workforce shortage here.

We are also running the risk of losing volunteers from our small community fire departments and EMT services. They are also subject to the governor's latest order despite being volunteers. Many may step down rather than be subject to Covid vaccination mandates even though they are acting in a volunteer capacity providing public safety and emergency management services for their communities.

We are constantly reminded to listen to "the science." However, scientific discussion on this topic is more reminiscent of dogma than a process of enlightened inquiry. Covid survival rates may very well end up like influenza statistics. Other nations with higher vaccination rates are experiencing spikes in the virus with the variant being more short-lived than the original virus. We are working hard to adhere to best practices to reduce transmission but using the full weight of government coercion for vaccinations and specific treatments is just wrong.

These decisions must be grounded in a respect of the civil and humanitarian rights of our citizens. We should be looking at how other states are encouraging their citizens to be vaccinated. For the record, all three of us are fully vaccinated, making that medical decision for ourselves. Forcing an idea or treatment will only cause more division and discontent than we already are hearing from people all over the state.

Our fellow Washingtonians are fully capable of practicing social distancing, staying home when feeling ill, and other tried-and-true measures to curb transmission and protect the vulnerable. We can trust our friends and neighbors to do the right thing! We need to make it about choice, every school district, every community, every neighborhood has its own unique challenges, and they are best equipped to make those choices, not a disconnected bureaucracy and unilateral edicts from Olympia.

We are asking you to provide clear legal reasoning for the authority to issue these mandates that are more substantive than the vague and broad declarations given to date. We assert that it's time to lift the state of emergency, governor, and return power to the people.

Governor Inslee and Superintendent Reykdal, people are tired of being told what to do, having goal posts moved and dealing with arbitrary mandates. We should not be forced to inject a substance into our bodies against our will.

Sincerely,



Senator Judy Warnick  
13<sup>th</sup> Legislative District



Representative Tom Dent  
13<sup>th</sup> Legislative District



Representative Alex Ybarra  
13<sup>th</sup> Legislative District